



# CAREER MATTERS

APRIL 2001



## ASSIGNMENTS RECAP

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The Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing (EQUAL) is an assignment listing that advertises authorize requirements to specific locations to overseas and for return to CONUS, (NOT special duty). A member will compete for the overseas assignment based on his volunteer status and Time-on-Station (TOS). Join Spouse couple will compete for assignment on EQUAL to overseas locations ONLY. For join spouse couples to compete on EQUAL, there has to be a requirement for both member's on the same EQUAL listing.

CONUS: EQUAL listing advertises requirements from overseas back to the CONUS. These are valid requirements that exist at specific CONUS locations (NOT special duty). Members compete based on the current tour they are serving. The priority is as follows:

1. Member's serving on a dependent restricted short tour location 12-month tour, Korea for example,
2. Member's serving the unaccompanied 15-month tour at a split tour location, 15/24, Turkey, Guam,
3. Member's serving the accompanied 24-month at a split tour and long tour 24/36 will have the last priority.

Join/Spouse couples DO NOT compete on EQUAL when returning to the CONUS. Their assignments are worked directly between the assignment NCOs at AFPC to find a joint location (may/may not be on the published EQUAL listing). Assignment will be based on AF needs first; assignment preference sheet may be taken into consideration.

Approximately 12-13 months prior to a member's DEROS, they will receive a DEROS forecast notice. This allows

member to make elections for their DEROS. Members have 5 options:

1. Request an In-Place Consecutive Overseas Tour (IPCOT)
2. Extend DEROS by 1 - 36 months
3. Request an Indefinite DEROS
4. Request a 12-month extension under the Overseas Tour Extension Incentive Program (OTEIP)
5. Maintain current DEROS.

When member's request extensions, and commander approves, requests are forwarded to MAJCOM/AFPC. Approval takes approximately 3-4 weeks. Members must obtain any required retainability for the requested extension NLT 15 days after notification of approval. Members that fail to obtain the required retainability timely, will risk having their old DEROS reinstated.

For first term airmen only: After members receive their DEROS election option notice, they can elect to apply for an OS to CONUS BOP. Members who desire a BOP must make an election on their DEROS option notice to maintain their current DEROS and must obtain the required PCS retainability for CONUS PCS (12-months from DEROS month). A hard copy of BOP application is turned into the MPF and flows to AFPC for approval. Member must reenlist within 30 days after PCS notification.

Military couples, both must be eligible for BOP, if one of the member's is not eligible application will be disapproved.

## ENLISTED QUARTERLY ASSIGNMENTS LISTING (EQUAL)

*HQ AFPC*

EQUAL is the assignment listing which advertises most of our enlisted assign-

ments which are sending people overseas and providing CONUS assignments for overseas returnees. These assignments are advertised and matched eight times a year (four cycles each for those going to and from the overseas area). The listing tells you what is available by AFSC, grade, and location. It allows you to align your preferences to actual Air Force needs. EQUAL listings may be viewed at your MPF, with your Commander's Support Staff, or on AFPC's World Wide Web.

CONUS members are eligible for reassignment to overseas locations when they have completed the required time on station (TOS). The normal TOS requirement for overseas assignment is 12 months for first-term airmen and 24 months for career airmen. In addition to TOS requirements, members must meet established quality control criteria for reassignment (not under Article 15 punishment, not on the Control Roster, not in Drug/Alcohol rehabilitation, no rating of 2 or lower on latest EPR, etc.). You also need to be eligible to obtain the required retainability for the assignment you are volunteering for.

For example, you are a married TSgt

**TABLE 1. CONUS to Overseas**

RNLTD	Posted	PREF Due	Selections
Jan/Feb/Mar	20 Apr 01	30 Apr 01	11May
Apr/May/Jun	7 Aug 01	17 Aug 01	3 Sep 01
Jul/Aug/Sep	6 Nov 01	16 Nov 01	26 Nov 01
Oct/Nov/Dec	TBD	TBD	TBD

nearing your high year of tenure and are only able to get 36 months of retainability (you only have 36 months after the RNLTD of the advertised requirement, before you retire) and you see a requirement for Kadena AB on EQUAL for your AFSC and grade. You know that if you volunteer as an extended tour volunteer

you have a higher priority than a standard tour volunteer. But guess what? You can't be an extended tour volunteer because you can't obtain the required 48 months of retainability and the computer would not select you. So to be properly considered for this Kadena requirement, you would need to volunteer for the standard tour length of 36 months.

Overseas members with an indefinite DEROS are eligible for a consecutive overseas tour (COT) anytime after completing their original tour. Individuals with an established DEROS can also be considered for a COT but can only volunteer for advertised requirements with a reporting date (RNLT) equal to your DEROS month or the following two months.

For example, if your DEROS is Jan,

**TABLE 2. Overseas to CONUS**

RNLT	Posted	PREF Due	Selections
Jan/Feb/Mar	13 Apr	20 Apr	21 May 01
Apr/May/Jun	24 Jul 01	3 Aug 01	20 Aug 01
Jul/Aug/Sep	23 Oct 01	2 Nov 01	19 Nov 01
Oct/Nov/Dec	22 Jan 02	1 Feb 02	18 Feb 02

you are eligible to compete for assignments with Jan, Feb, or Mar reporting. You must meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in AFI 36-2110.

If you are not selected for a COT assignment or didn't volunteer because you want to return to the CONUS, you will compete for a CONUS assignment during your overseas return cycle. You must have 12 months retainability after DEROS to be considered for a return assignment. You only need 7-12 months if you're on a short tour where the accompanied tour is not authorized, and high year of tenure restricted from getting the full 12 months. If you do not have or obtain the required retainability by the required date, your DEROS will be involuntarily extended to match your DOS. For answers to questions or other specific information on retainability issues, contact your local MPF or Commander's Support Staff.

Military personnel married to military personnel DO NOT use the overseas returnee EQUAL list. AF couples DO use the overseas EQUAL listing to apply for overseas assignments, including COTs.

For more information, see the Join Spouse Program topic

## JOIN SPOUSE PROGRAM

HQ AFPC

What is a join spouse couple? It's essentially an active duty military member married to another active duty military member. Air Force policy is to assign military couples together, when possible, to a location where they can live in the same residence. Remember, each member is serving in his or her own right and must fulfill the obligations expected of all Air Force personnel. Because the Air Force cannot guarantee military couples will be reassigned together, you should take all necessary steps to reduce the impact of a separation should it occur. Understanding the Join Spouse Program and applying it correctly is essential in preventing self imposed family separations. Here is a brief overview of the various aspects of the Join Spouse Program:

Married military couples are required to complete the AF Form 1048 (Military Spouse Information). This form lets AFPC know what your intentions/desires as a couple are. It tells us whether you do or do not want to be reassigned together. If you do want joint assignments, we will do everything reasonable to accommodate your desires in most situations. While your join-spouse-intent-code might tell us you want to be assigned together, there are some situations where it will be necessary for you to also formally apply for join spouse consideration. The situations that require formal application are:

Air Force members married to active members of another branch of service

Members who marry while assigned to different locations

Marriages that occur after one member has an assignment

It is very important for AF members who marry while proceeding to different assignment locations to contact the nearest Air Force installation. They should submit an application for Join Spouse assignment before arriving at

their new duty location. This is important for the military couple because it allows AFPC to consider the join spouse application and possibly issue instructions for a change in assignment.

To be eligible for a join spouse assignment you must meet the following:

- You must have 12 months time on station.
- You must be able to obtain 24 months retainability from the reporting date for a CONUS-to-CONUS move
- When assigned to the same or adjacent overseas location, you must serve the accompanied by dependents tour
- Both members must be serving on extended active duty in one of the US military services. This does not include reserve members on active duty for less than 12 months
- You cannot be pending separation or retirement within 12 months from the date you will be joined

When considering approval of a join spouse application, AFPC uses established guidelines. These guidelines ensure equal consideration of all requests. In order for us to approve a request, a requirement, not just a vacancy, must exist at the desired location. What's the difference between a vacancy and a requirement? A base may have an empty or vacant position available, but it might not be a requirement. We rely on a process that identifies which empty positions are required to be filled. Once an empty position has been identified as needing to be filled, it is called a requirement. Sometimes, there are vacancies that are not requirements and therefore, will not be filled. The next guideline for approval is that the member and his or her spouse must meet all eligibility criteria. Be aware that join spouse assignments are not permitted in conjunction with Base of Preference (BOP) reassignment program. In the event a member's AFSC cannot be used at the spouse's location, he/she may apply for retraining if eligible.

If you voluntarily request cancellation of a join spouse assignment or self-initiate a reassignment to a location other than where your military spouse is, you have told AFPC that you don't want to be assigned with your spouse. As a result, you may be separated from your spouse

and won't be eligible for further consideration to your spouse's location..... BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR. While your spouse may be able to subsequently request an assignment to your location, such a reassignment would not be under the joint spouse rules and, depending upon the circumstances at the time, could be a long shot at best. The AF will try to keep you together, but you have a key role in the success of this program.

As a military couple you are not authorized to be jointly assigned to overseas locations where government approved accompanied housing is not available. For example, if both you and your spouse were selected for assignment to Kunsan AB South Korea, you should immediately advise your MPF so corrective actions can be taken. In such a case, we would, depending upon the circumstances, attempt to find a different short tour during the same time frame for one of the members. This is especially important for couples who get married after being selected for an assignment. (If, by chance, you do end up at the same short tour location, one of you will be "continued" on to a different location. Obviously, it would be better to have this all settled up front rather than after you arrive at the "wrong" location). Military couples who are married in the overseas area while currently serving on a dependent restricted tour (such as Kunsan AB), may continue to serve in their own right and DEROS upon completion of the tour. Additionally, they can request to extend to match their spouse's DEROS so they can depart at the same time.

## **DATE ELIGIBLE TO RETURN FROM OVERSEAS (DEROS) FORECAST SYSTEM (DFS)**

*HQ AFPC*

The DEROS Forecast System was implemented as an effort to save PCS funds and improve the management of the DEROS program. In this section, we briefly address the indefinite DEROS, in-place consecutive overseas tours

(IPCOT), and consecutive overseas tours.

For those serving long tours in Alaska and Hawaii, an indefinite DEROS is automatically provided. If you elected to maintain your indefinite DEROS during your DEROS forecast option opportunity, but would now like to establish a DEROS, you may do so provided you choose a date 12-15 months in the future. (Your commander can adjust this period of time from 9 to 15 months.) For all other locations, requesting an indefinite DEROS is an option to be considered during your DEROS forecast process.

The in-place consecutive overseas tour (IPCOT) is another available option for all individuals at an overseas location. By applying for this program, you agree to serve an equal or longer tour than the one you are currently serving, at the same location. If your request is approved, you (and any command sponsored dependents) are entitled to COT leave travel. The effective date of your IPCOT will be on the completion of your original tour and any voluntary extension of tour (EOT).

If you are currently overseas and want to volunteer for a specific overseas base or country, the consecutive overseas tour (COT) program is for you. Members serving with an indefinite DEROS will receive continuous consideration for overseas requirements, as long as they are a consecutive overseas tour (COT) volunteer and have completed their current tour. Members who have an established DEROS will receive consideration for assignments during their DEROS month plus the following two months. By volunteering for the extended tour option, you agree to serve the standard tour length plus an additional 12 months. The advantage of being an extended tour volunteer is that you receive assignment consideration ahead of those members who only volunteer for the standard tour length. Here's an example. Let's say SSgt Nickel volunteered for Ramstein AB Germany as a standard tour volunteer and SSgt Dollar volunteered for the same base but for the extended tour. Assuming other things were equal (AFSC, grade, TOS, no quality factors, etc.) and both are eligible for

the assignment, SSgt Dollar would be selected for the assignment. Why? He has agreed to serve an additional year in the overseas area, which will save the Air Force PCS funds.

To be eligible for an overseas assignment, you MUST have or be able to obtain, the retainability for the tour for which you are volunteering. For example, you have a HYT that is 28 months away and you volunteer for a 36 month tour. You won't get selected because you cannot obtain the full 36 months of retainability for the assignment. If you are a second term or career airmen (not a first-termer), and are selected and then decline to get the required retainability, your assignment will be canceled and you will be required to separate or retire on your current DOS. (If you are already retirement eligible you may only be able to stay in six months from the time you refuse the assignment). If you do decline an assignment or have one canceled because of your unwillingness to obtain sufficient retainability, you will be ineligible for other assignments, except those for which you have the needed retainability. You can volunteer for overseas tours at your Commander's Support Staff (CSS) or MPF by completing the Air Force Form 392 or through PC III. Please note: If you have more than one AFSC and one is imbalanced, you will be selected in the imbalanced AFSC only. For more information on imbalanced AFSCs, see your MPF.

## **RETRAINEE ASSIGNMENTS**

*HQ AFPC*

The Air Force uses the retraining program to correct shortages and overages as a result of force structure changes, trained personnel requirements (TPR) changes, normal attrition, and manpower authorization changes. There are several airman retraining programs available and to find additional information about them you should contact your MPF Formal training unit. Any questions concerning any PCS reassignment in conjunction with retraining, should be directed to your MPF Relocations unit.



Notification of reassignment in conjunction with retraining will usually occur 120 days from class start date. There are situations where short notice notification of retraining is necessary (i.e. retaining is short notice and class start date is within 30 days) and in these cases retraining and assignment notification is provided by AFPC immediately to lessen any possible hardships. Notification by your MPF will usually occur within 3 days of receipt of AFPC notification message. If you are within 90 days of your projected class start date and haven't received assignment notification (PCS or PCA), you should contact your MPF as soon as possible so appropriate action can be taken.

Usually the reasons for the retraining (surpluses, force structure changes, trained personnel requirements) prevent us from keeping an individual overseas. It is essential, when possible, that airmen completing retraining to qualify in a new specialty are afforded assignment stability to permit skill level upgrading at the earliest possible opportunity. That said, overseas assignments in conjunction with retraining are not usually provided unless you are retraining into an imbalanced AFSC (see also the FAQ on Imbalanced AFSCs). Furthermore, if you are overseas when you receive your notification of approved retraining, you will not participate for a retraining assignment under EQUAL. Your assignment will be provided out-of-cycle by AFPC. Under no circumstance will an involuntary consecutive overseas assignment be provided in conjunction with retraining or otherwise.

Additionally, for those individuals assigned in the CONUS, the first consideration for utilization in conjunction with retraining is locally. The reason for this is to save on PCS funds. If this cannot be accomplished, you will be reassigned to a location where the AF has the greatest need. There is no list of requirements to view because AF requirements with regard to retraining are changing constantly and numerous factors prevent us from providing a listing like we do through EQUAL. Reassignment based on your assignment preferences and retraining AFSC is considered, but it is secondary to Air Force needs.

The CAREERS (first term reenlistment) program permits first term airmen who are eligible to reenlist to request retraining into another Air Force specialty, if retraining requirements exist, upon reenlistment. First-term airmen retraining under CAREERS may request an in-place Base of Preference (BOP), a PCS BOP, or both. It is necessary for first termers who are retraining under CAREERS to extend their enlistment to the maximum of 23 months or reenlist. Your MPF can answer any questions you might have concerning this and other programs.

If you have any questions concerning these or any available retraining programs, the retraining process, or general procedures, they should be directed to your servicing MPF. Additional information concerning retraining can be found on this website at URL: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlskills>

## **BASE OF PREFERENCE (BOP)**

*HQ AFPC*

The Air Force has approved an enhanced BOP program for first-term and career airmen. The new program allows first-term airmen (FTA) to apply for a CONUS-to-CONUS BOP, or an Overseas-to-CONUS BOP in addition to an in-place BOP (IPBOP). Career airman may now apply for a CONUS-to-CONUS BOP in addition to an IPBOP.

Those individuals already on assignment; FTA who have already reenlisted; those who have an assignment selection date; or have already forecasted from the overseas area are not authorized to request consideration at this time. These individuals will be able to apply when meeting the eligibility rules outlined in the MPFM which announced this program MPFM0029

FTA must submit their BOP requests prior to reenlistment. The earliest an application may be submitted is in conjunction with applying for a career job reservation (CJR).

There is no minimum time-on-station (TOS) for FTA applying for an IPBOP. However, FTA who wish to move PCS

under this program must complete 12 months TOS before the departure date. Individuals approved for a BOP are authorized a two-year assignment deferment.

First-term airmen serving overseas may request BOP consideration after they receive their DEROS Election Option RIP or Forecast Notification RIP. Members must obtain the minimum PCS retainability for CONUS PCS in order to apply for Overseas-to-CONUS BOP consideration. Airmen may list up to eight CONUS bases for both the CONUS-to-CONUS and Overseas-to-CONUS BOP. The preferences will be considered in the exact order listed. Members requesting overseas-to-CONUS BOPs will be reassigned through the normal oversea returnee process if BOP is disapproved.

The option for FTA to apply for a BOP in conjunction with retraining still exists.

Career airman may apply for either an IPBOP or CONUS-to-CONUS BOP. Airmen must have 41 months TOS at the time of application and at least 4 years TOS before PCS departure. Career airmen must not be selected for PCS or have an ASD. In addition, airman must not be an overseas volunteer or have any other voluntary applications pending. Applicants must be eligible for PCS without waivers. Consecutive BOPs in any combination are not authorized. Individuals approved for a BOP will appreciate a two-year assignment deferment.

Military couples are eligible; however, each individual must request BOP consideration and be eligible in their own right.

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